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ABSTRACT

Recommendations for preventing school vandalism and theft are provided in this guide. Following an introduction which cites factors related to school violence and steps which can be taken to reduce crime, the following general measures are discussed: (1) firm and fair school discipline including codes of conduct; (2) enforcement against loitering and intruders; (3) financial restitution for damages and the liability of parents for their child's actions; and (4) keeping the community informed of the problem and consequences of school vandalism. Characteristics of successful vandalism prevention programs are then briefly described, followed by examples of a variety of programs which involve students and the community including pride and awareness programs, neighborhood watch programs, student-centered and curriculum-oriented programs, and alternative education programs. In order to assist individual schools in assessing their school climate, a 69-item checklist is provided. (DC)

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ALTERNATIVES TO VANDALISM

"COOPERATION OR WRECKREATION"

School Safety Center
California Department of Justice
George Deukmejian, Attorney General

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ALTERNATIVES TO VANDALISM

"COOPERATION OR WRECKREATION"

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MESSAGE FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

"First Grade Teacher Jean Eccleston was in shock after finding out this morning vandals broke into her classroom and destroyed papers, books, plans and files gathered during her 14 years' teaching." (Daily Ledger, Antioch, March 5, 1981.)

"Steinbeck Staff Edgy Over Vandal with Master Key." (San Jose Mercury, March 26, 1981.)

"Fire Destroys High School; Arson Blamed." (San Francisco Chronicle, June 8, 1980.)

"Vandals Give Livermore Community-Wide Crisis." (Oakland Tribune, January 20, 1980.)

"Students Lose Their Best Friends to Vandals." (Los Angeles Herald Examiner, December 9, 1980.)

The examples go on and on, and the destruction reads like a property casualty list from a war zone. Vandalism, burglary, arson and theft are seriously affecting the schools' ability to educate. Schools are no longer sanctuaries exempt from such acts. It is indeed disturbing to hear a school official attempting to calm worried parents by assuring them the hallways and classrooms of the school are just as safe as the streets and alleys which surround them.

The monetary costs of vandalism are extensive and compelling. Property losses in California schools approach $100 million annually. Further, there are hidden costs which have tremendous impact on the school and are often overlooked. These hidden costs include the impact on educational programs and the psychological impact on students and adults. The staggering losses from these crimes can no longer be absorbed as "just another item in the school district's budget."

Schools do not have to be the hopeless victims of their circumstances. Many factors influence the amount of crime schools experience. Even though there may be deficiencies from the general society which schools cannot affect, there are factors connected with vandalism which are under their control.

This publication encourages taking a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to security; thus preventing victimization. The preventive approach is initiated before the crime occurs and includes both improved physical security (as outlined in the companion School Security Handbook available from the Office of the Attorney General, School Safety Center) and student/community activities.

The physical security approach requires taking actions to make school buildings less vulnerable to vandals and thieves. Student/community activities include a wide spectrum of programs which can motivate students and the public to respect and safeguard school property as their own. This approach is usually the most successful because students are involved directly.

This publication also encourages school officials to recognize and share their problems with the community, rather than becoming defensive because they are afraid to reflect a negative image. Safety and security of students, personnel, school facilities and equipment must become a priority. Seeking help and anticipating problems is by no means a sign of weakness. There is ample strength and support available. The money saved can surely be used in more meaningful programs than vandalism repair. We encourage you to use this publication to make your schools "islands of safety."

This publication was prepared to help school administrators and staff select appropriate student/community programs to reduce school-related crime. It is intended to be used as a guide from which ideas can be garnered and then tailored to meet local style and need. The effectiveness of any program depends upon how much each participant contributes.

Information is available from the School Safety Center about specific successful programs in California. School Safety Center staff can provide contacts for further information about any program listed in this publication.

The vandal operates under the cover of darkness. Bring him into the light.

George Deukmejian
Attorney General
State of California

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A PREVENTION FRAME OF MIND

Many behavioral scientists suggest defining vandalism as a "senseless and motiveless crime." This definition contributes to the frustration of prevention. If vandalism is not a reasoned attack, how can you defend against it? These crimes often are written off as jokes, pranks or "sickness" which exist within a certain age group. The costly effects of vandalism and theft, however, preclude their being swept under the rug with a shrug and a "kids-will-be-kids" attitude. We do not have to accept vandalism as an insolvable problem.

Regardless of the motive (or lack of motive), vandalism, theft, arson and burglary are aggressive acts prohibited by law and, as such, are criminal acts. Below is a list of strategies to use to prevent this problem.

The first step is demonstrating an attitude which does not tolerate these crimes. Schools and society have accepted present levels of vandalism. Tolerance of vandalism and theft goes hand in hand with higher insurance premiums and, more important, it conveys a message to the perpetrators that we are at a loss as to what to do. Theft and vandalism can be reduced through an aggressive program of opportunity reduction and positive motivation involving students. Remember, vulnerability allows victimization.

The principal ingredient in successful efforts toward vandalism reduction is not more money or more laws, but rather, the active involvement of the educational community. Interagency cooperation is an essential component. In their final report, "Challenge for the Third Century: Education in a Safe Environment," the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency concludes:

> ". . . Approaches that advocate the quick cure and the easy remedy will often fail because they ignore the complex and diverse causes of these problems. Meaningful progress in this area can only be achieved by engaging in sober assessment, not hysterical reaction, and instituting thoughtful measures rather than making glib promises. From the beginning, it has been the subcommittee's contention that a proper environment for learning is not merely the absence of violence and vandalism but is the presence of an atmosphere in which parents, teachers, students and administrators have the means to address the underlying problems which result in these eruptions." (Senate Report No. 95, 1st Session, page 3 (1977).) (School on-site councils, vandalism task forces, interagency coordinating councils and police/school diversion programs are highly recommended as a beginning.)

Schools are easy targets for vandals. Most are public, secular and unoccupied for many hours. Statistical analysis has shown there are certain consistent factors associated with high levels of school violence and property loss. These factors include:

- Hostile and authoritarian attitudes on the part of staff toward students.
- Lack of coordination between faculty and administration.
- Students not valuing their teachers' opinions of them.
- Residential concentration around the school. The school's proximity to students' homes may make the school a convenient target for vandalism.

- The presence of nonstudent youth around school.
- School and class size.

In contrast, the following suggestions may contribute positively to crime reduction in schools:

- The role of the principal is primary to the success of any school, but it is the key in schools which are seriously affected by crime.
- Crime in schools must be recognized as a significant problem and the problem should receive the open public attention and concern it deserves.
- If crime is a serious problem in a school or school district, the security of students and staffs must become the priority consideration.
- School districts and communities need to recognize that schools can do a great deal to reduce crime and disruption.
- Seriously affected schools should evaluate their curricula for appropriateness.
- Consideration should be given to increasing the personalization of secondary schools. Anonymity breeds contempt.
- School officials should become knowledgeable about successful programs working in other communities. Also, several technical assistance and program clearinghouses are available through local, state and national resource agencies. Good ideas must be adapted for local use.
- The schools, law enforcement, courts and community must develop a more effective relationship. Prevention has much more impact in practice than in concept.

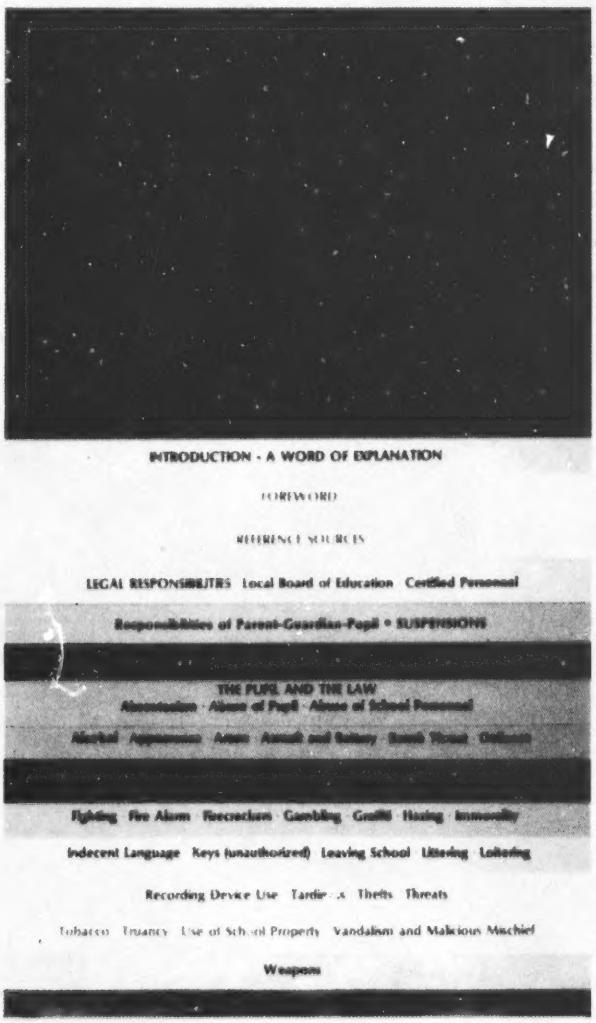
GENERAL MEASURES AGAINST VANDALISM AND THEFT

Firm and fair discipline in the school

A firm code of conduct, fairly enforced, is important to the delivery of educational services within a school. National studies on school vandalism and violence consistently point to lax, inconsistent and/or unfair discipline policies.

A comprehensive code of conduct must be publicized, discussed with each parent and child and then strictly and consistently enforced. It should include immediate consequences which are clearly understood by student and staff.

The format of just such a code is illustrated below.


INTRODUCTION - A WORD OF EXPLANATION
FOREWORD
REFERENCE SOURCES
LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES Local Board of Education Certified Personnel
Responsibilities of Parent-Guardian-Pupil • SUSPENSIONS
THE PUPIL AND THE LAW
Abuse of Pupil • Abuse of School Personnel
Fighting Fire Alarm Firecracker Gambling Graffiti Hazing Immorality
Indecent Language Keys (unauthorized) Leaving School Littering Loitering
Recording Device Use Tardiness Thefts Threats
Tobacco Truancy Use of School Property Vandalism and Malicious Mischief
Weapons

Enforcement against loitering/school intruders

The complexities of class scheduling, the movement of students from classroom to classroom and the necessity for breaks during the school day all contribute to the problem of loitering.

Most loitering problems associated with acts of vandalism or theft are associated with youths being on school grounds or in school buildings without authority or permission of school personnel. Restrictions as to loitering should be applied to all individuals and groups. Playground facilities open to public use after school should be isolated from school buildings whenever possible.

Most schools utilize passes, which are very effective in reducing the number of loiterers. Identification cards assist staff and law enforcement in apprehending nonstudents. In addition, schools should provide that:

- Truants are dealt with through an ongoing truancy reduction program and their role in vandalism and daylight burglary should be fully acknowledged.
- Expelled or suspended students must never be allowed on school property without direct supervision until reinstated.
- A consistent policy of attendance and recordkeeping must be implemented to avoid unauthorized "wandering."

Another means of reducing loitering is by posting warning signs in parts of the school building or places adjacent to the building or grounds where loitering is a particular problem. While court rulings have made California school loitering laws difficult to enforce, effective policies can be implemented. The San Diego Unified School District may have the answer. In 1974, the San Diego Unified School District adopted the City Trespass Ordinance: No one is allowed on campus without permission.

This approach is highly successful, according to Alex Rascon, Jr., security services director for San Diego City Schools, and has been adopted by other school districts in the county. The San Diego City Schools trespass regulations and relevant municipal codes are printed on a pocket-sized card which can be carried by school or security personnel. When a problem arises, a card is issued to the potential violator who is then asked to leave the premises.

The text of the card is as follows:

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS TRESPASS REGULATIONS

Trespass regulation adopted by the Board of Education of the San Diego City School District on April 24, 1973, pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code Sections 52.70.01-52.70.03 is listed below. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of $500 or imprisonment in the County Jail for six months or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Any person who is not a student of the school or an officer or employee of the San Diego City School District shall, immediately upon entering any school building or the grounds of the school during school hours on days when school is in session, report his presence and the reason therefor to the principal of the school or to a person designated by the principal to

receive such report. Any such person who is requested either by the principal of the school or the designee of the principal to leave a school building or school grounds shall promptly depart therefrom and not return thereto for at least 48 hours.

Any person who fails within a reasonable time to report his presence and the reason therefor, when required by this regulation to do so, or who fails to leave a school building or school grounds promptly upon request of the principal of the school or the designee of the principal or who, after leaving a school building or school grounds pursuant to a request of the principal, returned thereto within 48 hours, has committed an unlawful act and shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of San Diego Municipal Code Sections 52.70.01-52.70.03.

Any person who is requested pursuant to this regulation to leave a school building or school grounds and who leaves pursuant to the request of the principal of the school or the designee of the principal may after his departure therefrom appeal to the Superintendent of Schools. Such an appeal shall be made not later than the second succeeding school day after the person has departed from the school building or school grounds. The superintendent shall, after reviewing the matter with the principal or his designee and the person seeking ingress to the school during school hours, render his decision within 24 hours after the appeal is made. A decision of the superintendent may be appealed by the person seeking ingress to the school during school hours to the San Diego City Board of Education. Such an appeal shall be made not later than the second succeeding school day after the superintendent has rendered his decision. The governing board of the school district shall consider and decide the appeal at its next scheduled regular or adjourned regular public meeting, and the decision of the Board of Education shall be final.

Adequate signs providing public notice of this regulation shall be posted at every entrance to each school grounds of the San Diego City School District.

Sec. 52.70.01 SAN DIEGO PUBLIC SCHOOL TRESPASS ORDINANCE

This ordinance may be cited as the San Diego Public School Trespass Ordinance.

Sec. 52.70.02 UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS - FAILURE TO REPORT PRESENCE ON SCHOOL PREMISES

It shall be unlawful for any person who is not a student of the school or an officer or employee of the public elementary or public secondary schools of the City to fail to comply with the public school regulations requiring the person to report his presence on the school premises and the reason therefor to the principal of the school or to a person designated by the principal to receive such report within a reasonable time after being present on the school premises. This section shall apply only in the event the person is given notice of the school regulations requiring him to report his presence on school premises and the reasons therefor to the principal or to a person designated by the principal to receive such reports.

Sec. 52.70.03 UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS - FAILURE TO LEAVE SCHOOL PREMISES UPON REQUEST

It shall be unlawful for any person who is not a student of the school or an officer or employee of the public elementary or public secondary schools of the City to fail to comply with the public school regulations requiring the person to leave a school building or school grounds promptly upon request of the principal of the school or the designee of the principal or who, after leaving a school building or school grounds pursuant to the request of the principal of the school or the designee of the principal, fails to comply with the public school regulations requiring him to remain off the school premises for forty-eight (48) hours. This section shall apply only in the event the person is given notice of the school regulations requiring him to leave school premises upon request of the school principal or the designee of the principal and requiring him to remain off the school premises for forty-eight (48) hours.

This ordinance becomes effective June 1, 1973.

Direct restitution

In California, parents are legally and financially responsible for acts of their children. The most current laws governing parent liability follow:

Education Code Section 48909 - willful damage of school property; liability of parent

"(a) Notwithstanding Section 1714.1 of the Civil Code, the parent or guardian of any minor whose willful misconduct results in injury or death to any pupil or any person employed by or performing volunteer services for a school district or private school or who willfully cuts, defaces, or otherwise injures in any way any property, real or personal, belonging to a school district or private school, or personal property of any school employee shall be liable for all such damages so caused by the minor. The liability of the parent or guardian shall not exceed five thousand dollars ($5,000). The parent or guardian shall also be liable for the amount of any reward not exceeding five thousand dollars ($5,000) paid pursuant to Section 53069.5 of the Government Code. The parent or guardian of a minor shall be liable to a school district or private school for all property belonging to the school district or private school loaned to the minor and not returned upon demand of an employee of the district or private school authorized to make the demand."

Civil Code Section 1714.1 - liability of parents

"(a) Any act of willful misconduct of a minor which results in injury or death to another person or in any injury to the property of another shall be imputed to the parent or guardian having custody or control of the minor for all purposes of civil damages, and such parent or guardian having custody or control shall be jointly and severally liable with such minor for any damages resulting from such willful misconduct.

"The joint and several liability of the parent or guardian having custody or control of a minor under subdivision (a) of this section shall not exceed five thousand dollars ($5000) for each tort of the minor, and in the case of injury to a person, such imputed liability shall be further limited to medical, dental and hospital expenses incurred by such injured person, not to exceed five thousand dollars ($5000). The liability imposed by this section is in addition to any liability now imposed by law.

"(b) Any act of willful misconduct of a minor which results in the defacement of property of another with paint or a similar substance shall be imputed to the parent or guardian having custody or control of the minor for all purposes of civil damages, including court costs, and attorney's fees, to the prevailing party, and such parent or guardian having custody or control shall be jointly and severally liable with such minor for any damages resulting from such willful misconduct, not to exceed five thousand dollars ($5000) for each tort of the minor."

Penal Code Section 490.5(d) - petty theft of property from merchant or library

"(d) All fines collected under this section shall be collected and distributed in accordance with Sections 1463 and 1463.1 of the Penal Code; provided, however, that a county may, by a majority vote of the members of its board of supervisors, allocate any amount up to, but not exceeding 50 percent of such fines to the county superintendent of schools for allocation to local school districts. The fines allocated shall be administered by the county superintendent of schools to finance public school programs, which provide counseling or other educational services designed to discourage shoplifting, theft, and burglary. Subject to rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, each county superintendent of schools shall allocate such funds to school districts within the county which submit project applications designed to further the educational purposes of this section. The costs of administration of this section by each county superintendent of schools shall be paid from the funds allocated to the county superintendent of schools."

Restitution made directly by the offending youth is highly effective. The accountability aspect is very important. In several counties, restitution is administered through a court-ordered work program or through community or police diversion programs.

It is interesting to note that the Charter Oaks Unified School District successfully collected approximately $100,000 from a juvenile arsonist. The district sued the minor as an unnamed insured on the family's homeowner policy. This might be an action for other districts to consider.

Letting the community know

Community education and awareness of vandalism is essential, for when a school is a victim of crime, so is the community. PTA newsletters or periodic reports from the superintendent or principal to parents are effective channels of communication. It is also important to be sure the board of education is aware of all incidences of crime and vandalism, and then this information should be disseminated to the local media.

Research indicates there are techniques to make schools less vulnerable to vandals (some were mentioned earlier). The following suggestions are especially effective against problems occurring during nonschool hours:

- Keep the school occupied for longer hours. Allow meetings on the premises by local organizations.
- Watch the school. Use security patrols and neighboring families as additional "eyes and ears."
- Control access to the school site by channeling visitors through gates.
- Design or modify the school with crime prevention in mind. Don't forget to consider landscaping.
- Repair any damage immediately. A damaged building is a more likely target for vandals.
- Work with courts and prosecute whenever possible.

PLANNING A PREVENTION PROGRAM

Remember, no single program will work. A combination of approaches, tailored to local problems must be chosen. The plan should comprehensively "cover all bases."

Successful programs involve:

- An honest assessment of the scope and nature of the problem.
- Involvement of students, parents, community leaders, law enforcement, media and school staff in program planning.
- Assignment of the management of security problems to one person who coordinates the plan.
- Programs must be tied into the classroom learning process.

Other considerations might include:

- A strong emphasis on self-respect, community ownership and pride.
- Efforts to combat vandalism and theft, characterized by simple, direct and uniform messages concerning cost, as well as methods and motivation to reduce these crimes.
- Monitoring and evaluation of procedures for changing the program.
- Training on a regular basis for students, staff and the community.
- Administration and staff knowledge of laws and due process procedures.
- Law enforcement and school cooperation.

STUDENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

All programs described in the following sectio s are intended to be "stepping stones" toward a local plan of action. The "grocery list" of programs is not intended to be comprehensive, but it includes several successful approaches.

School and community pride and awareness programs

Poster/essay/photo contests:

A poster contest on vandalism is one way in which students, teachers and the community can become involved in an awareness campaign against vandalism. The principal components are:

- Theme and rules set by students and parents.
- Solicitation of businesses or other organizations to donate prizes.
- Involvement of members of the community, including the media, to serve as judges for the contest.
- Publicity for winners and community-centered award of prizes.

While a poster contest is ideal for elementary grades, an essay or photo contest might be more appropriate for junior and senior high schools.

Incentive awards/vandalism funds:

This program involves the use of incentive awards to encourage individual schools to take an active role in vandalism reduction. There are many variations to this program, but basically, students and the community are rewarded monetarily for their success. The money is then used by the school and students for a variety of school-related purposes.

School pride and improvement:

Maintaining attractive schools is extremely important. When buildings are in poor condition, the resulting attitude erodes discipline, morale and learning. Some schools have utilized students as student patrols or safety monitors, assigning these students such responsibilities as antilitter campaigns.

Included in such a program may be a pride flag, a pride trophy or other emblems, badges or plaques which positively reinforce the importance of student participation. A great deal of positive peer pressure is utilized and delinquent behavior is not acceptable. Other components might include:

- School spirit days
- Bumper sticker contests
- Slogan contests
- School assemblies
- Media campaigns
- Speeches
- Buttons
- Field trips
- Celebrity awareness programs
- School beautification programs

Neighborhood Watch/parent alert programs

These programs seek the assistance of neighbors to watch and report to police any suspicious activities during weekends or evenings when school is closed. The community becomes an extra set of eyes and ears.

Operation Identification:

Parents and students can be mobilized to assist in marking school property with permanent identification numbers. Engravers and crime-watch warning decals are available through local law enforcement agencies.

Vandalism task force/school site committees:

A task force or site committee is comprised of school and community members and is charged with setting goals and determining the needs of the school. These groups meet regularly with staff to formulate site-specific control strategies.

Adopt-a-school:

This program involves business or other community organizations "adopting" a school. The parent agencies free their staffs to assist the students, teachers and school in a variety of helpful ways, for a brief period of time, to introduce students to the business community.

Secret witness:

A program can be developed by which rewards are paid to anonymous individuals who provide information leading to the identification and apprehension of vandalism suspects. Telephone lines may be established specifically for that purpose and designed to encourage anonymous citizen participation.

Section 53069.5 of the California Government Code states:

> "A local agency, as defined in Section 54951 [which includes school districts], may offer and pay a reward, the amount thereof to be determined by the local agency, for information leading to the determination of the identity of, and the apprehension of, any person whose willful misconduct results in injury or death to any person or who willfully damages or destroys any property.
>
> "Any person whose willful misconduct has resulted in injury or death to any student or any person employed by or performing volunteer services for a local agency or who has willfully damaged or destroyed any property of a local agency or any property of any other local agency or state or federal agency located within the boundaries of the local agency shall be liable for the amount of any reward paid pursuant to this section and if he is an unemancipated minor his parent or guardian shall also be liable for the amount."

Student-centered programs

Peer counseling:

This program involves kids talking to kids. Students can be specially trained in communication and listening skills and then provide an excellent resource for those reluctant to talk to their teachers or counselors. Administrators who have successfully used this approach indicate that eliminating adult participation often leads to an open exchange among students. Placing the responsibility on youth to deter their fellow students from vandalism helps to form positive attitudes for all involved.

Student involvement:

The goals of these programs are: (1) to look to students - all kinds of students - to help make school a safer and better place for learning, and (2) to train and involve students, particularly those not involved before, in real decision making about school policies and operations. The components of the programs include:

- Focusing on natural student leaders (not just student body officers or honor students).
- Organizing those leaders to address and identify issues which contribute to tension and alienation on campus.
- Developing a leadership training class which meets as a regular class and provides skills necessary to become successful problem solvers and decision makers.

These leaders learn:

- How school decisions are made.
- What students' rights and responsibilities are.
- How to effect change.
- Planning skills.
- Social interaction skills.

Student involvement creates a process which allows those most directly affected by the school to participate in its improvement.

School security advisory council:

Several school districts have established voluntary student security advisory councils which conduct workshops and small group discussions focusing on vandalism and violence prevention. These committees increase awareness of the school's problems, generate recommendations for action and give students an opportunity to participate in school decision making.

Youth courts/student juries:

The use of peer juries to dissuade the practice of school vandalism has proven effective in some schools. It is usually tied in with a positive restitution program. Such juries serve to reinforce the negative attitude of the offenders' peers toward vandalism. They also emphasize the accountability

factor of actions at the peer level, which often has more of an impact than coming from an adult level. Students are given a choice of accepting a student court decision or accepting administrative discipline. Limitations must be set on the jurisdiction of these courts.

Curriculum-oriented programs

Law-related education:

These programs are designed as civics education and crime prevention curriculum. The overall goals are: (1) to increase student understanding of concepts and values favoring law-abiding behavior, (2) to develop student skills for examining and resolving conflict in a positive manner, and (3) to increase student knowledge regarding specific laws affecting juveniles.

Character education:

These programs are designed as social studies or language arts curriculum. The objective is to help teachers influence children to understand themselves and to determine their own values, goals and lifetime habits. These programs can:

- Increase school attendance.
- Help children relate to society.
- Improve classroom discipline.
- Reduce theft, vandalism and violence.
- Improve academic performance.
- Create better parent/teacher relations.
- Improve school/community relations.

A compendium of character education programs in California public schools was compiled in January 1981 by the Senate Select Committee on Innovations in School Finance and Character Education, Senator Albert S. Rodda, Chairman. For further information on obtaining a copy, contact the Senate Finance Committee in Sacramento at the State Capitol.

Constructive discipline:

These programs are geared toward decreasing disruptive behavior, increasing positive teacher/pupil contacts and decreasing vandalism costs. This is accomplished by:

- Using academic materials in which students exhibit high interest.
- Giving students positive recognition or reinforcement for working on and completing assignments.
- Enhancing classroom and schoolwide discipline while reducing the use of punishment.
- Using appropriate learning principles and behavior management procedures.
- Using classroom and schoolwide antivandalism programs.
- Training teachers and giving them skills which make them feel more competent, confident and less tense in their interactions with students.
- Eliminating the need for "power struggles" and giving teachers skills necessary to remain flexible, yet in control.

- Providing extensive training to school counselors and psychologists to enhance their consulting skills with teachers.

District/alternative education programs

Community-centered classroom:

The following programs are designed to motivate, assist and involve youth and their families who are not being served by the regular program. They serve students who have been expelled, those referred from school attendance review boards and the courts, those with truancy problems, those who are in the expulsion process or those for whom there are no other feasible educational options. These programs focus on:

- Flexibility.
- Individual attention.
- Development of self-awareness.
- Academic and vocational skills training.
- Positive group cohesiveness.
- Support services from the community.

This is accomplished through an academic program, parent participation and community involvement.

Success-oriented schools (SOS):

An SOS focuses on discipline. Five or six rules are agreed upon by the staff. There is also agreement and commitment for consequences resulting from violation of the rules. The staff is trained to apply discipline in a consistent manner. Students and parents are informed of the rules and consequences. SOS programs result in a few clear rules evenly enforced throughout the school.

School within a school:

These programs are designed to offer alternative education within an already existing school. The goals are to: (1) better correlate the learning process with experimental activities, (2) provide more individualized attention and a closer teacher/student relationship, (3) involve the parents, students and teachers to create an educational community, and (4) provide alternatives for those who are alienated or "turned off" to school. Student credit is achieved through a series of contracts mutually decided upon by the teacher and student. Students are motivated because they are involved in the decision-making process.

Action learning/life skills:

These terms refer to apprenticeship programs, as well as training in practical aspects of adult life. Apprenticeship programs allow students academic credit for community work. Adult life classes provide instruction in skills such as checkbook balancing, comparative shopping and applying for a job. Both address the boredom and frustration that are linked to truancy, violence and vandalism by providing relevant, meaningful alternatives.

Vocational training:

These programs are geared toward combining academic course work with actual on-the-job experience. They provide skills necessary for career planning and job exploration and are geared to an individual student's motivation and responsibility level. They integrate learning with the all-important experience aspect. This has proven to be successful in keeping youth interested and attending school.

School guidance teams:

These are actually mini-school attendance review boards where problems are detected at an early stage. The dean of students or assistant principal, school psychologist, counselor, teacher, student and other designated personnel meet to deal with special problem areas. The approach is case management and intervention, and the goal is to resolve a problem before it escalates. A course of action is agreed upon by all participants, a contract is signed by all involved and a weekly monitoring system is implemented. The course of action could include counseling, academic and social diagnostic testing, alternative education options or further referral to the school attendance review board or law enforcement agency.

Student/family resource centers:

These programs supply support services to students and their families. The programs include counseling, parent effectiveness training, health services and other educational and resource services. They provide alternatives outside of the "system" and are community-based. They, however, work closely with schools and other agencies and often function in a liaison capacity.

Alternatives to suspension:

Suspensions and expulsions are not always effective in dealing with discipline problems. Consideration should be given to alternatives and any plan should utilize all available resources. For instance, in some districts a Saturday work program has been implemented. Students spend four to six hours on Saturday working on campus or studying in classrooms. Alternative options are discussed and decided upon by parents, the students and the school officials. Alternatives emphasize accountability for actions and require that the student meet certain expectations before returning to school. This is far more effective than just spending time out of school, which is often what students want in the first place. In-school suspensions, such as reassignment to a special class or completion of specific projects, are also effective.

Police/school liaison:

Many police departments have school resource officers assigned to serve as liaisons with the schools in their jurisdiction. In addition, "Officer Friendly" programs may be available. The major objective is to put the officer in a positive relationship with students and increase understanding and communication through consistent contact before a crisis situation occurs.

Dropouts:

These programs are designed to retrieve dropouts and provide them with a program, either in the day or evening, to assist them in completing minimum high school requirements. This is often done through adult education and is attractive to those who no longer feel "pressured" into going to school. Often these groups of youths are responsible for a great deal of vandalism and theft. By getting these students back in school, the problem is often reduced.

SCHOOL CLIMATE CHECKLIST

School climate is the prevailing feeling or attitude within a school. The climate may either contribute to or destroy the effectiveness of any school. The primary goal of school is education. However, unless students and staff believe the climate and environment are safe, effective education is not attainable. A safe school climate must be a high priority.

A positive school climate encourages commitment and personal responsibility for all members of the school. School climate is instrumental in alleviating vandalism, behavior problems and other negative acts.

The first step to improve the educational environment is to assess the climate. Such information is fundamental to any planning for change that a school would undertake. The attached checklist provides a tool to determine a school climate and to aid in decision making. Even if you do not have any problems at present, anticipation often prevents victimization.

The checklist is broken down into specific areas. Strengths and/or weaknesses can be determined, plans can be made and action can be initiated.

The rating of areas simply consists of a check in the "Yes/No" section after each statement. A "No" response indicates an area in which improvement should be considered by staff, students and community members.

	Yes	No
Student morale		
1. Students feel what they are learning is important and will help them in their personal lives.	___	___
2. Students are proud of their school.	___	___
3. Student attendance is good.	___	___
4. The various student social and/or racial groups (cliques) communicate with one another, respect one another and work together.	___	___
5. Students and staff participate in problem solving and school improvement activities.	___	___
6. There is a feeling of trust, caring and mutual respect among teachers and students.	___	___
7. Students feel they can talk to at least one staff member about personal problems.	___	___
8. Most students participate in school social activities.	___	___
9. Students are familiar with, and held accountable to, codes of conduct.	___	___

	Yes	No
Student achievement		
10. All students at all skill levels are challenged, encouraged and expected to do well.	___	___
11. Students value the opinions of their teachers.	___	___
12. Students have an opportunity to demonstrate positive skills and talents.	___	___
13. Information about school and community resources, to help with specific problems, is made available and used by students.	___	___
14. Staff members model the behavior they wish to see in students.	___	___
15. Students are programmed into classes commensurate with their abilities.	___	___
16. Students receive prompt feedback about their performance on assignments.	___	___
17. Staff is available for, and students are encouraged to seek, assistance outside of class time for their academic pursuits.	___	___
Teacher morale		
18. Staff are proud to be part of the school.	___	___
19. Staff members exhibit a sense of cohesiveness, trust and acceptance among themselves.	___	___
20. Teachers feel their input on policy planning and implementation is encouraged and accepted by the administration.	___	___
21. Appropriate in-service training is provided regularly.	___	___
22. Teachers are involved in, and have input into, in-service training.	___	___
23. Certificated and classified staff communicate well with one another and work together for the benefit of the students and school.	___	___
24. Staff know their efforts are supported by school and district administration.	___	___
25. Teachers feel they are in control in their classrooms and are confident that site administrators will back them up.	___	___
26. Teachers are comfortable with students.	___	___

	Yes	No
27. Teachers feel good about what they are doing.	___	___
Administration		
28. The administration provides sufficient knowledge and training for teachers in handling discipline problems.	___	___
29. The administration provides strong leadership.	___	___
30. The administration is an effective support service to the classroom teacher.	___	___
31. The administration provides the staff with a working knowledge of district goals and school-site goals in curriculum areas.	___	___
32. The administrative staff work as a team, rather than as a group of individuals.	___	___
33. The administration has made a serious attempt to balance the racial and ethnic composition of the school community.	___	___
Curriculum		
34. Alternative programs are available to assist the gifted as well as the slow learner.	___	___
35. Staff members accurately diagnose student academic and social needs.	___	___
36. Special programs, such as educationally handicapped and physically handicapped, etc., are understood and supported by the total staff.	___	___
37. Special help is available for students with special needs.	___	___
38. Counseling staff are involved in actual counseling, not just performing clerical duties.	___	___
39. The curriculum reflects the ethnic, racial and sexual composition of the community.	___	___
40. Teachers express and demonstrate a concern with and commitment to student achievement.	___	___
41. Staff members develop curricular activities and create a learning environment to help students establish goals.	___	___
42. Adequate resource materials are readily accessible to teachers.	___	___
43. Curriculum combines academic and social learning skills.	___	___

	Yes	No
44. Standards of excellence cross all departments, for example, proper English skills are also required in social studies classes.	___	___

Discipline

45. There is a set policy of discipline, such as a student handbook, and it is distributed to and discussed with all students.	___	___
46. Behavior problems are recognized and resolved promptly.	___	___
47. School staff know the difference between criminal violations and discipline incidents. Discipline problems are handled by school. Criminal violations are handled by law enforcement.	___	___
48. Appropriate penalties are given for violations of discipline policy.	___	___
49. Conflict in the school is dealt with constructively, and all contributing factors are evaluated.	___	___
50. Safety of other students is a consideration when resolving discipline incidents.	___	___
51. There are resources to resolve conflicts which include student participation.	___	___
52. Alternatives to referrals, suspension and expulsion are built into the discipline policy.	___	___
53. Rules are fairly and consistently applied to all students.	___	___
54. There is strict adherence to and enforcement of school rules by the total staff.	___	___
55. Discipline serves to teach expected behavior, as well as provide punishment for inappropriate behavior.	___	___
56. Classroom management policies exist and are followed by all staff.	___	___
57. Discipline problems are handled by every staff member, not just administration.	___	___

Safety

58. A plan is operating to reduce vandalism.	___	___
59. The school has a litter prevention program.	___	___

		Yes	No
60.	The school is designed with crime prevention in mind, such as minimum entry points, proper landscaping, etc.	___	___
61.	There are no areas of the school campus where students are apprehensive about their physical safety.	___	___
62.	There is some type of on-site vandalism committee, which includes students.	___	___
63.	There is no graffiti on the school buildings.	___	___
64.	Fights and/or gang activity are unusual occurrences.	___	___
65.	Students can carry money without fear of physical harm or threats by other students.	___	___

Community

66.	Neighbors are committed to calling law enforcement when suspicious or illegal behavior is occurring.	___	___
67.	Local law enforcement officials, whose beat encompasses the school, know and communicate with both youth and staff.	___	___
68.	The community feels a sense of pride and ownership in the school.	___	___
69.	Parents are involved in school planning for campus safety.	___	___